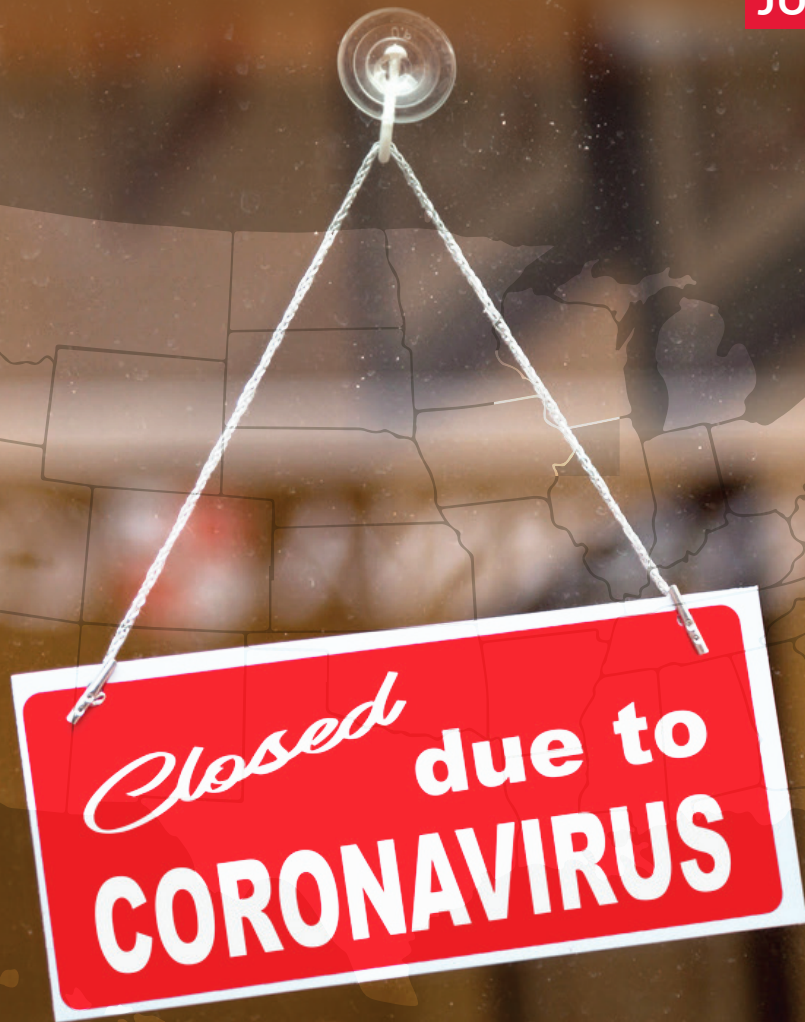


CONGRESSMAN TOM MCCLINTOCK'S  
**CAPITOL COMMENTS**



**JUNE 2020**



**TIME TO REOPEN**



Dear Friend:

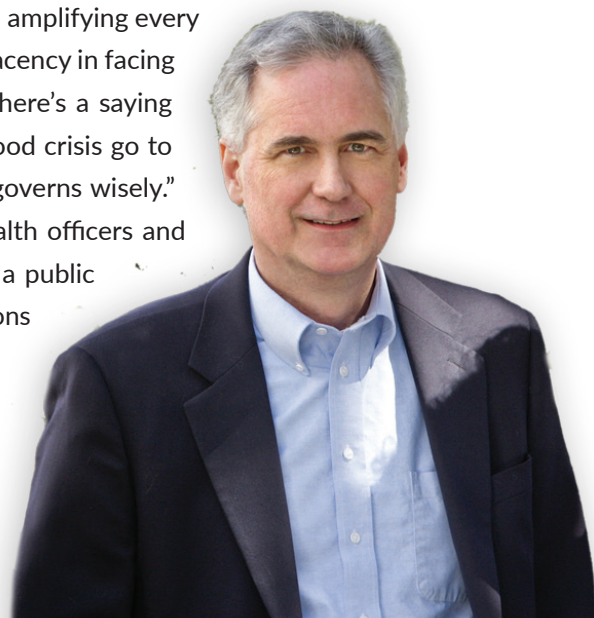
Since the Coronavirus Panic began in March, I've spoken and written extensively about the damage that government measures have done to our economy, to our liberties and to our future as a nation. Now that the panic is abating and the most restrictive measures are being lifted in most states, I wanted to share some thoughts with you.

The wholesale lockdown of the American people and the deliberate decimation of their livelihoods has been the single most self-destructive folly in our nation's history. These draconian measures have proven much less effective at stopping the virus than we were assured -- but have been much more effective at destroying the jobs that people rely upon to feed their families.

The panic began with flawed models using false data making absurd predictions. According to the most lurid of them, Covid-19 would kill 2.2 million Americans with a virulence some 35 times greater than seasonal flu. Although leading epidemiologists vigorously disputed these apocalyptic predictions, they were attacked, marginalized and ignored. Local, state and federal officials -- here and in other countries -- became caught up in the hysteria.

As the virus spread, media outlets began displaying running death counts and amplifying every alarming story about the disease. No politician wants to be accused of complacency in facing a mortal danger, or of callousness toward constituents who are afflicted. There's a saying in journalism that "bad news sells," and a maxim in politics "never to let a good crisis go to waste." And as Benjamin Franklin warned, "Passion governs, and she never governs wisely." The hyperbolic statements of preening politicians, self-important public health officers and agenda-driven journalists were never justified, and they deliberately fueled a public panic that laid waste to western economies and have undermined the foundations of western civilization.

  
Tom McClintock







# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU PUT “EXPERTS” IN CHARGE

Lord Salisbury, a 19th Century British Prime Minister, summed up his education in national leadership this way: “No lesson seems to be so deeply inculcated by the experience of life as that you never should trust experts. If you believe the doctors, nothing is wholesome: if you believe the theologians, nothing is innocent: if you believe the soldiers, nothing is safe. They all require to have their strong wine diluted by a very large admixture of insipid common sense.”

Experts have the luxury of indulging their worst fears and ignoring the effect that their policies have beyond their area of expertise. That’s why public policy decisions are reserved to elected public officials, who are expected to rationally balance risks and costs, apply common sense and good judgment and most of all, stand to account for those decisions.

That important check on the excesses of experts broke down in the coronavirus panic. It has taken just a few months of unprecedented home detention of entire populations, the shuttering of countless businesses and the trampling of fundamental American rights to transform the most promising economic expansion in our lifetimes into a dystopian nightmare of unemployment, poverty and despair.

First, they substantially overstated the severity of COVID-19. Eighty percent of people who get the virus have either no symptoms or experience it as a mild respiratory infection. In New York, 73.6 percent of those who died were over age 65 and just 0.06 percent were under age 18.

How did the “experts” follow this science? They closed schools and packed nursing homes with infected patients.

Once epidemiologists began surveying general populations, they discovered the disease isn’t nearly as severe as the claims used to justify these excesses. The CDC’s latest best estimate is that 0.4 percent of symptomatic cases are fatal. Seasonal flu kills 0.1 percent.

Simply stated, your chance of recovering from the flu is 99.9 percent and 99.6 percent for COVID-19. If you are healthy and under 50, COVID-19 is less lethal than the common flu. Yet the “experts” believed this justified throwing more than 40 million Americans into unemployment, hitting the poorest families the hardest.

*Life is precious and every death is a tragedy. Yet last year, 38,800 Americans died in automobile accidents and no one has suggested saving all those lives by forbidding people from driving – though surely we could.*

In 1957, the Asian flu pandemic killed 116,000 Americans, the equivalent of 220,000 in today’s population. The Eisenhower generation didn’t strip grocery shelves of toilet paper, confine the entire population to their homes or lay waste to the economy. They coped and got through. Today we remember Sputnik – but not the Asian flu.

In 1968, the Avian flu killed 100,000 Americans (the equivalent of 160,000 today). Today we remember Woodstock – but not the Avian flu.

Next, they ordered wholesale population-wide lockdowns founded on an untested theory. Where did the nihilistic idea that government should close an entire nation to hide from a virus come from?

According to a history compiled by the American Institute for Economic Research, it began in 2006, when George W. Bush read about the 1918 Spanish Flu and tasked two advisors – neither of whom had any experience in virology or epidemiology – to recommend a contingency plan to contain a future pandemic. They stumbled upon a paper that had begun as a 14-year old Albuquerque teenager's science project. Her father, an engineer at Sandia labs with no experience in epidemiology or virology, proudly helped her turn it into a pseudo-science paper and submitted it to the CDC, where it was dutifully published.

When the policy was submitted to the scientific community for review, actual epidemiologists savaged it. One called it the product of medieval superstition. Donald Henderson, the scientist credited with vanquishing smallpox, warned, "The negative consequences of large-scale quarantine are so extreme (forced confinement of sick people with the well; complete restriction of movement of large populations...) that this mitigation measure should be eliminated from serious consideration."

### *Instead, this high school science project became a policy option for a pandemic. How has it worked out?*

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has now admitted that 84 percent of COVID-19 hospitalizations in New York are people either already "sheltering at home" or at nursing homes. Obviously, the lockdowns didn't protect them.

Statistical analysts, including Stanford University's Michael Levitt, Tel Aviv University's Isaac Ben-Israel, Kentucky State University's Wilfred Reilly and Cypress Semi-conductor's T.J. Rodgers, are finding no significant statistical difference in the infection curves between those jurisdictions that have laid waste to their economies and those that haven't. A study by JP Morgan notes that as economies re-open, infections are dropping.

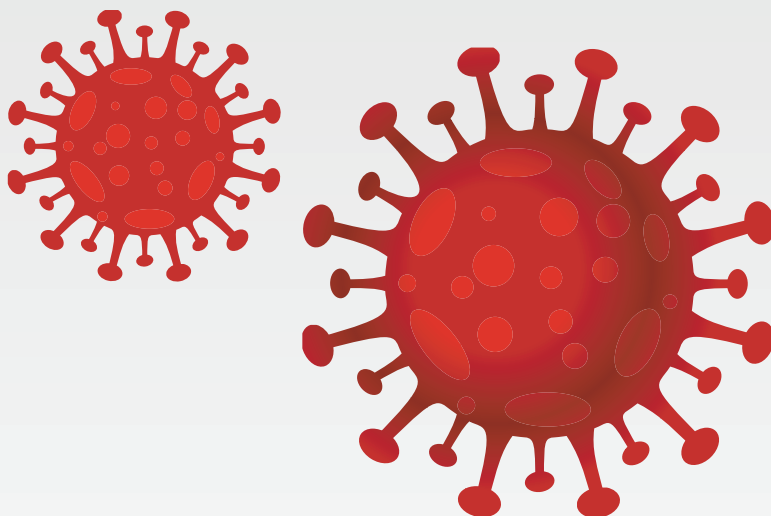
A study of 318 outbreaks involving 1,245 cases in China found just one transmission that occurred outdoors, infecting just two people.



Nearly 80 percent of the outbreaks occurred in people's houses. What did the "experts" do with this science? They closed outdoor venues and ordered people to stay at home.

Worst of all, the experts never considered how many people will die because of the lockdowns. The Well Being Trust predicts up to 75,000 additional "deaths of despair" due to suicide and drug and alcohol abuse. The Epic Health Research Network reported that in March, breast, colon and cervical cancer screenings declined between 84 and 96 percent. The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network reports a 22 percent increase in children calling for help. A 2011 Columbia University study funded by the National Institutes of Health estimated that 4.5 percent of all deaths in the United States are related to poverty. Until the Covid-19 economic shut-down, the poverty rate in the United States had dropped to its lowest in 17 years. Over the last four years, 2.47 million Americans had been lifted out of that condition, meaning 7,700 fewer poverty-related deaths each year.

How many Americans have the "experts" condemned to despair, delayed health care and poverty? Likely far more than will die from COVID-19. ■





# CIVIL LIBERTIES

The damage to the economy and to the livelihoods and lives of millions of Americans is just now beginning to hit home as the panic subsides and events generate new crises for politicians and “experts” to exploit. Less tangible, and yet more disturbing, is the damage to American liberties that just a few months ago would have been inconceivable.

Quarantine is the forced confinement of a specific person who has contracted or been exposed to an infectious disease. Although it is a long-standing police power of governments, it is seldom used. When it must be used, it is subject



to due process: the right to contest the order in court, to present evidence that the order is invalid, and to have it vacated.

What happened during the panic is radically different and profoundly un-American: the indefinite and indiscriminate home detention without due process of perfectly healthy people on the pretext that they might catch a contagious disease.

This new power, asserted in increasingly arbitrary and aggressive manners by public servants-turned-masters, is antithetical to our First Amendment right to peaceably assemble and our Fifth Amendment right to not be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law. The courts recognize some restrictions of these rights, but only by “the least restrictive means,” not arbitrary and unreasonable edicts.

In California, this abusive power was used to deny citizens the right to protest the abuse itself, at least until the agenda shifted and the George Floyd riots fulfilled the left’s agenda of promoting racial division. Then, suddenly, the same paragons condemning peaceful lockdown protests as “dangerous,” found violent protests “courageous.” Public health officials who condemned the lockdown protests as threatening to public health embraced the Floyd protests as contributing to public health.

In North Carolina, the Raleigh Police Department declared, “Protesting is a non-essential activity.” In Pennsylvania, police fined a woman \$200 for taking a solitary drive in her own car. Looters, however, went unmolested in cities across the nation. A San Diego woman is threatened with a \$1,000 fine and jail-time for promoting a protest on Facebook.

*Ironically, while law-abiding citizens are arrested for exercising rights guaranteed under their Bill of Rights, authorities are releasing thousands of criminals from prisons and in California, forbidding sheriffs from holding a wide class of criminal suspects.*

One of the most disturbing developments was to single out churches as “non-essential activities” and to arrest American citizens attempting to exercise their First Amendment right to practice their religion freely.



Religious practice is a nuisance to petty-tyrants and would-be demigods because it makes the absolute social control that they crave much harder to achieve. That is why leftists have singled out churches for special abuse, even while allowing factories, day care centers and shopping centers to reopen under certain rules. How it is that the same rules on social distancing in a factory can't be practiced by a church? If a factory worker can sit next to a co-worker for eight hours a day in a factory – why can't he be trusted to sit one hour a week next to a congregant in a church?

*When asked this question, Gavin Newsom answered that churches were “high risk and low reward” and thus non-essential. Ironically, America’s houses of worship produce the most important product in a society in times like these: hope.*

But the greatest threat the new lockdown culture presents to our civil liberties is that it is fundamentally altering the relationship between Americans and their government. It is the age-old question that Cecil B. DeMille framed in his introduction to “The Ten Commandments,” “Are men the property of the state, or are they free souls under God?”

Every time we step outside our homes, the risks we face multiply. A free society assumes that its citizens are competent to assess those risks, balance them against the avoidance costs, and to manage their decisions in a generally responsible way. It's called common sense, and is a necessary prerequisite for self-government and liberty.

When a risk presents itself, people naturally change their behavior. If they believe the risk of leaving their houses is too great, they are free to stay at home. If they believe venturing beyond their front doors is a manageable risk, they are free to venture into the world, taking those precautions that to them seem most prudent. In an epidemic, their assessments of risk might convince them to avoid crowded theaters or restaurants, wash their hands more frequently, avoid handshakes, wear masks or become hermits. These acts don't require force and don't make demands on others. They are a matter of individual judgment and choice.

In this pandemic, many elected officials have abandoned the practices of a free society, have crossed some very bright lines that separate free Americans from those unfortunate to live under authoritarian regimes, and have set a very dangerous precedent for the future. ■







# THE BREAKDOWN OF INSTITUTIONS

Religious institutions aren't the only impediment to leftist authoritarianism. Representative legislative bodies also pose an obstacle. It's hard to impose dictates from on high as long as deliberative bodies – filled with contentious, diverse, opinionated elected representatives – have a role in the decision-making.

The consolidation of power is now taking place in the people's House, where Pelosi's majority changed the rules to relieve representatives of the responsibility to attend committee hearings or House sessions, or even be present in Washington to vote. Instead, members may simply hand their votes to colleagues while basking poolside. Committee hearings, where policy is supposed to be formed by the give-and-take negotiations between members, are now relegated to sterile and carefully controlled "Zoom" meetings.

The word "Congress" literally means "the act of coming together and meeting." The Constitution calls for representatives to "attend," "assemble" and "meet." Congress is a deliberative body and by its very nature that requires the people's representatives to interact with each other both through formal proceedings as well as through the countless informal conversations that are the unique product of "coming together and meeting."

Fulfilling that duty, Congress has met throughout every war and pandemic that has come before us. The Senate continues to meet in session, as do state legislatures and city councils across America. We expect grocery clerks to show up at four in the morning to restock the shelves, but the House of Representatives is going to phone it in.

*Each elected representative IS the proxy for their constituents. The people have a right to expect their representatives to speak and vote for them – and answer to them – not hand off that trust to someone entirely unaccountable because they're too lazy or too scared to show up for work.*

Wannabe potentates abhor the chaotic and unpredictable nature of assemblies. The more their deliberations can be curtailed, the more their negotiations can be hindered, the less engaged their members become, the stronger the role of a single will – the nature of totalitarian regimes. ■





# WHAT IS TO COME?

The left believes the aftermath of the coronavirus panic will produce a population dependent on government, inured to social control, subservient to self-appointed experts and dedicated to “woke” culture. They may be right.

But more likely, I believe that as this panic subsides and the full measure of the damage it has caused is taken, America could see instead a re-birth of liberty, a fresh skepticism of charlatans who seek to control every aspect of our lives, and fiscal constraints on government that will produce the most dramatic downsizing of bureaucracies in our history.

Apocalyptic climate scenarios modeled by “experts” that have been used to advance the left’s agenda for decades may finally come under new scrutiny now that the public has experienced the damage done by faulty coronavirus scenarios.

The designs for an all-encompassing welfare state may finally face the fulfillment of Margaret Thatcher’s prophesy that sooner or later, “socialists run out of other people’s money.” State and local governments are already facing the necessity to make deep cuts as their revenues plummet.

Leftist economics is based on the assumption that the government finances the economy. As Americans can now plainly see, the real world works in precisely the opposite manner: the economy finances the government, and when the economy is shut down, so too is the revenue feeding the left’s agenda.

The violent riots that in part drew their energy, destructiveness and intensity from the pent-up frustration and anger of an entire population in lockdown, may awaken the great silent majority that has slumbered since the last era of radical violence – an awakening that produced a Republican re-alignment that began in 1968.

Confronted with the devastation caused by the lockdowns, Americans may discover a new appreciation for the growth policies of free market capitalism and a new disdain for the economic stagnation of command-and-control socialism.

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*Which direction our country takes will be decided in the election of 2020. A nation like ours, with a proud heritage of freedom, has seen the best and worst of times in the span of just six months.*

We began the year with one of the greatest economic expansions in our history, lifting millions of Americans out of poverty, boosting wages for American workers and producing the lowest unemployment rates in fifty years – all set in motion by economic policies that included the largest regulatory rollback in history and one of the biggest tax cuts.

After just a few months of leftist authoritarian policies, that prosperity lies in ruins. These policies have rapidly produced not only with highest unemployment rates since the Great Depression, but the collapse of the rule of law in jurisdictions across the country that all have one thing in common: years of leftist control.

Americans began the year in a world of growing American prosperity and strength produced by the policies of freedom. In just three months, authoritarian socialism replaced it with a dystopian world of poverty and chaos. The election of 2020 will decide which world we will leave to our children. ■